

## TEC/WG Communications Topic Group Conference Meeting Notes April 19, 2000

### Participants:

Patricia Armijo, NTP-AL; Matt Baca, ATR; Nancy Bennett, ATR; Debby Cohen, National Safety Council; Martha Crosland, EM-22; Sam Dixon, City of Westminster, CO; Audrey Eidelman, ECA; Ray English, DOE-Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program; Judith Espinosa, ATR; Beth Farrell Hale, SAIC; Liz Helvey, JK Associates; Judith Holm, NTP-AL; Ken Niles, State of Oregon; Phil Paull, CSGERC; Carol Peabody, EM-HQ; Wilda Portner, SAIC; Lisa Sattler, MWCSG; Alex Thrower, SAIC; Jon Wright, EM-HQ

This conference call addressed a number of action items resulting from the February 15, 2000, Topic Group meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, as well as upcoming events.

We discussed: the next meeting of the overall TEC/WG, which will be held July 25, 26 and 27, 2000, in Indianapolis; the National Safety Council brochure on low-level waste; Topic Group review of NTP and Sandia website on transportation and packaging; updates on several Risk Communication research projects now underway; and key message development.

### Action Items:

Responsible Party	Action to be Taken
All	Review and provide comments on ATR risk communication bibliography and outline, EIS Qs&As bibliography, matrix and outline. Also submit articles, papers, etc., for inclusion in risk communication bibliography.
L. Helvey, L. Sattler, A. Eidelman	Review communication programs of DOE shipping campaigns, other hazardous materials shipments. N. Bennett to provide EIS-related information.
K. Niles, L. Helvey, M. Power	Review EISs and make recommendations on more effective ways to communicate the results of the analyses of potential transportation impacts.
P. Paull, K. Niles	Work on additional key message development.

### Action Items:

Judith Holm (NTP-AL) announced the dates and location of the next TEC/WG general meeting. It will be held July 25, 26 and 27 in Indianapolis. Additional logistical information on the conference will be available to TEC members by mid-May.

Martha Crosland (EM-22) updated the group on the progress being made on the brochure on low-level waste now being written by the National Safety Council. It will be available for Communications Topic Group members' review at the July TEC/WG meeting.

Judith Holm described two websites the Communications Topic Group will be asked to review. The first is under development by Sandia National Laboratories and concerns transportation package engineering, testing and regulatory work, and relating it to an accident in the real world. The website will be available for Topic Group review this summer. Topic Group members will be able to provide comments on the site's design and information on-line.

Topic Group members will also be asked for input into a revamped National Transportation Program website, now in the very preliminary stages of revision. Program people have been asked to submit content requirements for the site. A goal that has been identified so far is greater NTP visibility on DOE's website. Bobby Sanchez of NTP is leading the effort.

Nancy Bennett and Judith Espinosa of ATR discussed the Risk Communication bibliography their organization is now compiling. The idea is to create an annotated bibliography, or abstracts, of books, manuals, conference papers, journal articles, etc., for states and DOE to use when developing key messages and putting together public information materials. They are focusing on radioactive materials transportation and risk communication issues over the last five years. The bibliography will have about 50 entries. To the extent possible, materials cited in the bibliography will be available online from T-REX. Some materials cited are copyrighted and therefore not available on T-REX, but information on how to get the material will be available. Judith Espinosa asked for Topic Group feedback on the concept. Phil Paull (CSGERC) suggested the bibliographic information also be presented in a categorized matrix. Ken Niles (State of Oregon) suggested adding

pre-1995 Risk Communication literature by Paul Slovic and other “seminal” pieces from well-known authors. In addition, Communications Topic Group members were encouraged to submit papers or journal articles they have authored for inclusion in the bibliography. Information should be sent to Nancy Bennett, ATR, 1001 University SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106, fax: 505-246-6001, or e-mail [nbennett@unm.edu](mailto:nbennett@unm.edu).

Nancy Bennett and Judith Espinosa continued the discussion with an update on their research on DOE response to transportation comments contained in about 15 EISs, beginning in 1995. Comments and responses will be categorized and put into a database to see if responses are consistent, key messages are used, and to anticipate questions that need to be addressed in future documents. DOE might want to use the information resulting from the study to develop a question and answer document that would be made available to internal and external audiences. The Communications Topic Group will be asked for input on additional EISs to include in the study, categorization, uniformity in responses and suggest areas of improvement. Ken Niles suggested that the Yucca Mountain EIS be included in the study.

The two above projects could be integrated; resulting in a report that discusses how risk is described in EISs accompanied with a listing of criteria explaining what works when communicating risk.

This was followed with discussion of a “lessons learned” risk communication report based on review of EISs, DOE shipping campaigns, and other controversial hazardous material shipments’ communication programs. In addition to EISs, it was suggested that the communication programs in connection with the MOX, Fernald, WIPP, foreign fuels East Coast shipments and the Navy napalm rail shipment be included in the review. Liz Helvey (JK Associates), Lisa Sattler (MWCSCG) and Audrey Eidelman (ECA) will participate in the review. Nancy Bennett will provide appropriate additional information to them during the course of her EIS research. The resulting report would include findings and recommendations. It was suggested that the report might be of interest to the readers of the quarterly DOE NEPA Lessons Learned document. In addition, Ken Niles recommended the DOE NEPA Lessons Learned document as a comprehensive round-up of DOE NEPA activities. It is available on-line at <http://tis.eh.doe.gov/nepa/process/process.htm>.

Ken Niles briefed the group on his review of transportation risk communication in DOE EISs. He used a page from a recently released EIS as an example, saying if a person studied the table it would not help in understanding which alternative is the safest and was not a reader friendly way to explain risk. He suggested the following: entire, specific analysis and reports in EISs are useful, but they should be introduced with a short, understandable summary of the data that follows. Another suggestion was not using scientific notation and use of a bar graph to show at a glance which alternative is more risky. Ken Niles, Liz Helvey and Max Power will work together on coming up with additional examples and suggested improvements. It was suggested that the DOE Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance be contacted for additional information. In addition, Martha Crosland suggested Steve Frank (202-586-7478) of her office would be a useful resource because of his former position with the DOE NEPA office.

Phil Paull discussed key message development. He suggests keeping them positive, “big picture” statements that highlight the positive side of radioactive materials transportation. For example, radioactive materials transportation occurs because DOE is trying to clean up the environment, or shipments are made to allow for more effective management of hazardous materials. He will have additional key message suggestions on the next conference call, tentatively planned for the week of June 5.